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ABSTRACT

The Adult Basic Education/High School Equivalency (ABE/HSE) Services Program provides basic educational services for out-of-school youth and adults in New York City. The program offers classes in basic literacy (BL), basic education (BE), high school equivalency (HSE), and English as a second language (ESL). The program's budget is \$11 million. During the 1985-86 school year, 38,800 students enrolled in program classes at more than 300 locations. Immigrants made up 48 percent of enrollees. Seventeen percent of the students received public assistance. Forty percent of students were employed full-time, 10 percent worked part-time, 30 percent were unemployed and available for work; and 18 percent (primarily mothers of young children) were unemployed and unavailable for work. Students ranged from 17-70 years of age. Student achievement data are inconclusive because so few of those enrolled provided data that could be used to measure changes in achievement outcomes. However, students for whom there were complete data for two years showed moderate improvement in all categories; 25 percent of Level One BE students progressed at least one level as did 24 percent of Level Two students and 20 percent of Level Three students. Forty-six percent of the two-year ESL Level One students advanced at least one level as did 39 percent of Level Two students; 23 percent of the Level Three students advanced to Level Four. Additionally, 4 percent of ESL students moved to BE classes and 2 percent to HSE classes. As a result of the program evaluation, recommendations were made to offer teachers in-service training in methods for teaching adults, to establish permanent class sites, and to improve distribution of materials. (KC)

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Evaluation Section Report
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ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
1985 - 1986
END-OF-YEAR REPORT

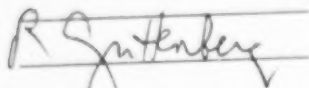
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SUMMARY

The Adult Basic Education/High School Equivalency (A.B.E./H.S.E.) Services Program, which is administered by the Office of Adult and Continuing Education, provides basic educational services for out-of-school youths and adults throughout the five boroughs of New York City. The program offers classes in basic literacy (B.L.), basic education (B.E.), high school equivalency (H.S.E.), and English as a second language (E.S.L.). The ultimate goal of all components is to raise the literacy level of students and to help them realize their educational and vocational potential.

The New York State Legislature provided approximately 50 percent of the \$11 million budgeted for A.B.E./H.S.E. programs. Additional funding was provided by the Refugee Education Act, the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC), the Job Training Partnership Act (J.T.P.A.), and other state and federal sources.

During the 1985-86 school year, 38,800 students enrolled in program classes at over 300 locations. Immigrants made up 48 percent of enrollees, up from 39 percent in 1984-85. Seventeen percent of the students received public assistance in 1985-86, versus 12 percent in 1984-85 and 15 percent in 1983-84. Forty percent of students were employed full-time; ten percent worked part-time; 30 percent were unemployed and available for work; and 18 percent (primarily mothers of young children) were unemployed and unavailable for work. Students ranged from 17 to 70 years of age.

Student achievement data are inconclusive because so few of those enrolled had data that could be used to measure changes in achievement outcomes. However, students for whom there were complete data for two years showed moderate improvement in all categories: 25 percent of Level One B.E. students progressed at least one level as did 24 percent of Level Two students and 20 percent of Level Three students. Forty-six percent of the two-year E.S.L. Level One students advanced at least one level as did 39 percent of Level Two students; 23 percent of the Level Three students advanced to Level Four. Additionally, four percent of E.S.L. students moved to B.E. classes and two percent to H.S.E. classes.

The following are among the recommendations contained in the evaluation report:

- Program teachers should be offered additional paid in-service training sessions in E.S.L. methodology and teaching methods for adult students.
- Permanent class sites should be established to accommodate the ever-increasing student population and to eliminate current site-related problems.
- Current supply distribution practices should be revised to ensure problem-free movement of books and materials to regional class sites.

I. INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Adult Basic Education/High School Equivalency (A.B.E./H.S.E.) Services Program of the Board of Education's Office of Adult and Continuing Education provides basic educational training to out-of-school youth and adults at over 300 locations throughout the five boroughs of New York City. In 1985-86, A.B.E./H.S.E. had an enrollment of 38,800, more than double that of 1983-84 (19,000 enrollees) and 4,800 more than 1984-85 (34,000). Fifteen regional offices, including one comprising a union consortium, and central administrative offices, oversee the program.

The program offers the following classes:

- Basic Literacy (B.L.) which is designed for students functioning below a third-grade reading level.
- Basic Education (B.E.), aimed at students functioning between a third- and eighth-grade reading level and focused on reading, language skills, and mathematics.
- High School Equivalency (H.S.E.) classes offered to students reading at or above an eighth-grade level, and focused on preparing students for the General Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.) examination.
- English as a second language (E.S.L.) which is intended for students whose native language is not English. This component is divided into four different levels, and emphasizes grammar and communication skills.

Basic Education instruction is also offered in Spanish, French, Greek, and Italian; high school equivalency preparation is provided in English, Spanish, and French.

Classes are held at "hub" sites and at single-site locations, accommodating requests from a broad range of agencies and organizations, including unions, community-based groups, non-profit and voluntary

agencies, housing projects, and hospitals. Flexible class schedules, with classes scheduled throughout the day, from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and sessions on Saturdays afford working people the opportunity to attend. Some centers offer expanded services such as personal counseling, job-training classes, and career counseling. Resources available at each of the centers include a library, multimedia materials, and a directory of community support services.

Of the 38,800 students enrolled in the program in 1985-86, nearly one-half were unemployed. Forty-eight percent were immigrants, most of whom had limited English proficiency. About one-fifth of the students were public assistance recipients. This compares to a total population of 34,000 in 1984-85 of which nearly 40 percent were immigrants and 12 percent were on public assistance.

Approximately one-half of A.B.E./H.S.E. funding is derived from monies made available by the New York State Legislature. Additional funds are provided by the Refugee Education Assistance Act, the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC), the Job Training Partnership Act (J.T.P.A), and other state and federal sources. The total budget for 1985-86 was slightly more than \$11 million.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The central purpose of the A.B.E./H.S.E. program is to provide instruction and support services to out-of-school youth and adults. Many members of this target population gained only marginal skills in the traditional educational system or are from countries with limited educational opportunities. The program's staff and teachers assess students' educational needs and provide an environment in which these

needs can be met and individual goals attained. Following are the specific goals of each component of the program:

- The B.L./B.E. component seeks to raise the literacy level of students and to prepare them for eventual enrollment in more advanced educational programs.
- The H.S.E. component aims to prepare students for the G.E.D. examination.
- The E.S.L. program strives to equip students with the English language skills that will help them to become functioning members of society.
- Support services seek to make students aware of the vocational and educational options available to them.

SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The Office of Educational Assessment/High School Evaluation Unit (O.E.A./H.S.E.U.) made site visits to each region and observed classes at hub sites and single-site locations during day and evening classes. To gather qualitative data on the program, the team conducted interviews with all 15 regional coordinators, and with 27 program counselors, 13 instructional facilitators, and 210 students. In addition, O.E.A./H.S.E.U. mailed questionnaires to 625 program teachers; 206 questionnaires were returned, of which 201 were sufficiently complete for purposes of analysis.

Quantitative data such as test scores and enrollment rates were obtained from project records for the 1984-85 and 1985-86 school years. Students were tested when they entered the program and at the end of each term using examinations designed for the different programs. Statistical analyses of test scores were made to measure the two-year progress of students receiving program services. Additional analyses focused on student achievement in 1985-86.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

Chapter II describes the implementation of the program during 1985-86, with particular attention to student recruitment and retention efforts. This chapter also discusses student characteristics and services provided by the program. Student achievement results are presented in Chapter III. Conclusions and recommendations are contained in Chapter IV.

II. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Adult Basic Education/High School Equivalency Services Program provides basic educational services to adults 17 years of age or over throughout New York City. The program is divided into 15 regions, one of which is a consortium of seven unions that has arranged classes for their members through the program. Each region is directed by an assistant coordinator, assisted by an instructional facilitator, and one or more counselors. Counselors are involved with student intake, individual counseling, and referrals to appropriate agencies, as needed. All regions have clerical staff to help with paperwork; some regions have extra staff to assist with administrative tasks. An evening supervisor is present at most sites that have a large number of evening classes. An assistant director oversees the central office with the assistance of administrators for the respective programs.

A.B.E./H.S.E. classes have been structured to meet the needs of a wide range of students--from those who speak little or no English to those seeking a high school equivalency diploma. Students functioning at or below the third-grade reading level take basic literacy classes; basic education classes are offered to students who read between the third and eighth-grade levels; high school equivalency classes are available for students at or above the eighth-grade level; and English as a second language classes, which are divided into four levels, are offered to students learning English, most of whom were born outside the United States.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Although many of the characteristics of the 1985-86 student population were similar to previous years there were some differences. The number of students served, however, increased dramatically, rising from just over 34,000 students in 1984-85 to over 38,800 in 1985-86. In 1985-86, 48 percent of the total student population were immigrants, an increase from 1984-85 when 39 percent were immigrants. The percentage of students receiving public assistance was 17 percent in 1985-86, up from 12 percent in 1984-85 and 15 percent in 1983-84.

Student employment characteristics were comparable to previous years'. Forty-one percent of students were employed full-time, 10 percent held part-time positions, 31 percent were unemployed and available for work, and 18 percent were unemployed and unavailable for work.*

Racial breakdowns of program students remained similar to previous years'. In 1985-86, 49 percent of the students were Hispanic, 31 percent black, 11 percent Asian, nine percent white, and less than one percent American Indian. Students ranged in age from 17 to 70 years, with an average age of 34 years.

In, 1985-86, 46 (17,901) of the students were enrolled in E.S.L. classes, 27 percent (10,258) in B.E. and B.L., 17 percent in H.S.E. (6,551), three percent in Job Training Partnership Act-sponsored classes (1,162), three percent in Municipal Assistance Corporation-funded classes (1,215), two percent in native literacy (784) and one percent (604) in special classes for refugees.**

* The unemployed and unavailable for work category consists primarily of mothers with young children.

** Program information was unavailable for an additional one percent (344) of program participants.

The evaluation team asked slightly more than 200 students to specify their reasons for enrolling in program classes. Nearly three-fifths said they sought to improve their English skills; one-half hoped to earn a G.E.D.; 30 percent took classes to improve their job performance; 10 percent enrolled to learn to read; and 10 percent wanted to gain knowledge that would enable them to help their children with school work. These students had been enrolled in program classes for an average of eight months.

SITES AND SCHEDULING

The A.B.E./H.S.E. program is available at over 300 locations throughout the five boroughs. During 1985-86, over 900 classes were offered, a substantial increase from the 368 classes offered in 1983-84 and up from the 721 classes offered in 1984-85. This dramatic increase in classes, which was linked to larger budgets allotted for program services, in such a short time has led to problems concerning the adequacy of some site locations. Teachers and coordinators alike agreed that the physical condition and location of classes significantly affect student recruitment and retention, teacher morale, and student attitudes toward learning.

Fifty percent (92) of the teachers believed that site location and condition "very much" influenced student retention, while 39 percent (76) thought that retention was "somewhat" influenced by these factors. These views were shared by 86 percent of coordinators and 64 percent of facilitators. Some teachers noted the popularity of class sites convenient to public transportation or near students' homes, and of hub sites, where a number of classes meet at the same time and students have an opportunity to socialize before and after classes.

Another site-related problem cited by one coordinator involved night

classes held in primary schools. This coordinator observed that some adults were reluctant to attend classes in a setting intended for children, noting further that such situations generated feelings of being treated like children--perceptions that were reinforced when adults were asked to use chairs designed for elementary school children. Some students therefore found attending classes at local colleges more motivating and more socially acceptable than attendance at a primary school.

Some of the problems associated with site location and condition can be resolved, some coordinators believed, by establishing more permanent class sites. About 30 percent of the coordinators said that the addition of centralized sites with comprehensive learning centers is one major change they would like to see in the program. They noted that such centers are needed not only because of the significant growth of the program, but also because of the advantages they would hold for attracting and retaining new students. Permanent sites would become well-known in a given community, thereby facilitating referrals to the program by both individuals and community groups.

Students learned of the program from a variety of sources. Of the students interviewed, slightly over 50 percent were told about the program by family or friends, 25 percent by a social service agency, and the remaining students learned about classes from fliers distributed by A.B.E./H.S.E. staff, local schools, employers, or radio advertisements.

About two-thirds of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire described the number of classes per week as "about right." In contrast, just under 30 percent (55) thought "too few" classes were offered.

Fourteen percent (28) believed that the number of individual class hours was "too few." A majority of facilitators (62 percent) deemed the number of class hours as "about right," basing their conclusions on student profiles of classes in their particular region.

Nearly all of the students interviewed reported satisfaction with the number of class hours per week. During interviews, however, the evaluator noted some variation in responses among unemployed and E.S.L. students on the one hand and students who were employed on the other. The former group believed more classes would be beneficial, while the latter considered three evenings a week somewhat excessive in light of such considerations as travel time and family commitments.

ADMINISTRATION

The central administrative unit and the regional offices manage program administration. At the regional level, an assistant coordinator oversees implementation as well as arrangements for class sites. The number of classes offered in each region depends on the geographic area, the demand for classes, and the number of sites available. Classes were offered as few as three hours and as many as 15 hours per week. (The Young Adult Learning Academy, region 16, offered Basic Education classes from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. four days a week.) Generally, each region offered a range of classes, with the number of classes set according to the needs and abilities of the students enrolled. For example, regions that served large numbers of recent immigrants offered mainly E.S.L. classes, whereas regions primarily serving a U.S.-born population offered more B.E. and H.S.E. classes.

The 15 regional coordinators interviewed reported the following

breakdown of their time: supervision of staff and teachers (40 percent), paperwork (31 percent), scheduling classes and identifying class sites (13 percent), addressing students' concerns (10 percent), and recruitment (six percent). Another expenditure of time involved maintaining contact and good relations with local social service agencies and community-based organizations. Virtually all of the assistant coordinators described their relationship with the central administrative office as either good or acceptable. Several suggested changes that they believed would enhance the program's effectiveness. Five coordinators specified centralized staff development as an area where more support was needed, and several said that program-wide conferences on E.S.L. methodology would be particularly useful for teachers lacking that kind of training. Several others pointed out the need for more teachers and support staff adequately prepared to deal with the expanded services. Finally, five assistant coordinators singled out better pay and benefits as a means of attracting new staff members and retaining people who have worked in the program for a number of years.

The 13 instructional facilitators interviewed had an average of 11 years service with the program. They worked with an average of 56 teachers in each region, a figure they regarded as high given the fact that class sites were dispersed, and made arranging regular site visits difficult. The facilitators reported the just under 60 percent of their time was spent working directly with teachers, either conducting individual or group training sessions, or observing classes. Roughly 30 percent of their time was spent developing or modifying curriculum materials and meeting with other staff, and 13 percent was spent on paperwork. Other activities ranged from testing students to reordering materials and

books. Instructional facilitators suggested several changes in the program: three believed that changes in program administration was indicated; two others saw a need for the central office to be more attuned to the special requirements of different regions; two said that comprehensive learning sites with centralized classes would permit better program integration; and two others pointed to on-going staff development as an area in need of improvement.

Counselors provided general services to students and some dealt primarily with intake procedures. The seven counselors interviewed who were chiefly responsible for intake spent nearly 40 percent of their time on this activity. Intake procedures involved testing students for placement and obtaining background information. Activities reported by other counselors included individual and group counseling (32 percent), referrals to appropriate agencies and contact with social service agencies (20 percent), paperwork (15 percent), and recruitment (12 percent). Meeting with other staff and contacting students who failed to attend classes accounted for the remaining 20 percent of their time. (Students interviewed reported few meetings with counselors, possibly because of the amount of time consumed by their other activities).

Counselors suggested several changes they believed could improve program services. The most frequently mentioned included better teacher selection, more orientation and counseling for students, centralized class sites, and better pay and benefits for program staff. More staff development was suggested by 15 percent of the counselors, and three said that clear-cut levels of advancement were needed to help clarify program goals. Screening for learning disabilities was another area

cited as needing improvement. In this connection, some counselors postulated that the previous academic difficulties of some program students could be attributable to learning problems that had gone undetected.

Just under one-third of the program's teachers responded to the O.E.A./H.S.E.U. survey. This low response rate suggests that survey findings may not be representative of all program teachers. However, of those who did respond, 44 percent (86) work with E.S.L. classes, 25 percent (49) with B.E. classes, 21 percent (42) with the H.S.E. component, four percent (eight) with literacy classes, and five percent (nine) with a combination of B.E. and H.S.E. classes. Fifty percent (101) of these teachers had been with the program for one year or less; the average number of years teaching in the program for the remaining teachers was approximately four years. Nearly two-thirds of the responding teachers taught one class, while 31 percent (61) taught two or three classes. Teachers reported an average enrollment of 31 students in their classes; the median enrollment was 28. The average attendance reported was 22 students with a median of 18. Teachers reported working at the following types of sites: 40 percent (77) worked at single-class sites, 22 percent (43) at hub sites, 15 percent (28) taught at other locations such as community-based organizations, and the remaining teachers taught at a combination of sites.

Fifty-one percent (94) of the teachers reported meeting with an instructional facilitator two or three times a month; 16 percent (30) met with a facilitator weekly; and 29 percent (53) said they had had only one meeting per term. Meetings between counselor and teachers

occurred less frequently. Twenty percent (35) of the teachers had never met with the counselor, but one-half reported meeting with the counselor two to four times a month. Twenty-five percent (44) reported meeting with the counselor once per term. Seventy percent (132) of the teachers met with the their region's assistant coordinator two to four times a month; 25 percent (47) met once a term. Despite varied site locations, the different schedules maintained in each region, and the number of teachers involved, it appears that administrative meetings occurred fairly regularly.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

The curricula for all programs were written by committees comprising teachers, instructional facilitators, and student liaison teachers. Teachers generally rated curriculum materials favorably: 83 percent (154) believed that materials were geared to the needs of older students and 88 percent (158) described the materials as the appropriate grade level for the students for whom they were intended. However, both teachers and facilitators noted interrelated problems involving the accessibility of curriculum materials. Thirty percent (56) of teachers said they had insufficient access to materials; 23 percent of facilitators said supplies were not delivered on a regular basis, and 38 percent said they had encountered problems transporting supplies to single-site locations.

In 1985-86, to broaden awareness of career opportunities and of job-seeking strategies, a career education component was added to some classes. Fifty-four percent of the students interviewed said teachers had discussed job-hunting strategies; 35 percent received advice on

proper conduct during job interviews; 11 percent practiced filling out job applications in class; 22 percent were told about the kinds of jobs available; and 27 percent had discussed the basic skills needed to perform well on any job.

Fifty-three percent (94) of the teachers reported integrating career education into classroom instruction. Of these, slightly more than two-thirds said job-search techniques, interview strategies, completing job applications, careers, and the work world were discussed. Other career-related activities cited included job placements, a program-wide career night, and self-awareness training. Regions with students who were unionized workers provided more job-oriented classes; for example, staff helped students prepare for tests that would lead to pay increases.

Students also participated in other projects designed to encourage career preparation, achieve a working knowledge of the legal system, and improve reading skills. To these ends, five regions videotaped mock interviews for the more advanced students. In nine regions, an average of 45 students participated in a project designed by central program staff to promote awareness of court functions, particularly small claims court. Reading labs in five regions served an average of 135 students per region. These labs featured computer-based instruction designed to improve reading abilities.

Students interviewed rated the program highly, with 94 percent (196) describing their classes as "good" or "very good." When asked about their future educational or employment plans, most students indicated that they were planning to pursue other options beyond A.B.E./H.S.E. classes. One-fifth of the students said they planned to find employment,

and nearly three-fourths said they hoped to further their education in other settings. Five percent said they intended to continue taking program classes, primarily B.E. and B.L. students. These findings indicate that the program serves most students as a springboard to other education or career options.

Evaluators noted that during site visits, students frequently sought information about education options open to them beyond A.B.E./H.S.E. classes. A majority of the students interviewed expressed a desire to continue their education; however, many of them appeared to lack an informed view of the structure of higher education. Moreover, many students were unsure if they qualified for further educational opportunities, thus indicating a need, where appropriate, to incorporate information about higher education into program classes.

Teachers reported using varied teaching methods. Individualized instruction was preferred by 25 percent (51) of teachers; competency-based instruction by 24 percent (48); whole-group instruction by 19 percent (38); and paired learning by two percent (five). During site visits, evaluators observed the composition of groups with which these different methods were used. Individualized instruction was frequently the method of choice in literacy classes and whole-group instruction was the preferred method for H.S.E. classes and upper-level E.S.L. classes. Competency-based instruction was used in lower-level E.S.L. and B.E. classes in which the rate of progress varied among the students.

One characteristic unique to the A.B.E./H.S.E. program is that it allows students to enter at any time after the official start of classes. According to teachers, this policy has advantages as well as drawbacks.

The main advantage resides in the fact that once a prospective student is motivated to enter the program, the motivation can be acted upon immediately. If the student has to wait for the start of the next term, his or her resolve may weaken or disappear altogether. A major drawback of the "open classes" policy, some teachers believed, is that classes were more difficult to manage because of differing levels of ability and there was the added problem of having to guide the slower progress of late-entering students.

Program staff reported that in each region there are a few teachers who each term lose students, and suggested that this retention problem is probably attributable to quality of teaching. One coordinator observed that a "grandfather clause," which makes terminating poor-performing teachers difficult, is partly responsible for this situation. Another explanation advanced was that some teachers with temporary per diem licenses have little training in teaching methods. It was suggested that the problem could be alleviated by more staff development sessions, but little money is available for this purpose. (Only three sessions were offered during 1985-86, according to one coordinator.

III. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES

To assess the progress of students as measured by test scores and changes in course level, O.E.A./H.S.E.U. analyzed data supplied by program staff. Slightly more than 38,800 students were enrolled during 1985-86, 12 percent of whom also participated the previous year.

The analyses undertaken to assess students' improvement during the 1985-86 school year were changes in test scores during the school year for students enrolled in the program's components. Two-year trends in test scores, employment status, and individual student's course levels were also examined.

1985-86 ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT

E.S.L. Component

The pretest and posttest scores of 1985-86 E.S.L. students on the John Test of Oral English Proficiency were analyzed to assess student progress. The John Test consists of a series of drawings depicting seven different everyday scenes that students are asked to describe. Teachers then rate students' responses according to degree of English proficiency. Students were tested before being placed in classes and at the conclusion of each term to assess their progress. Complete scores were available for 5,467 students, or 31 percent of the E.S.L. students. As indicated in Table 1, students enrolled in Levels One and Two showed large gains: Level One students gained an average of 12.4 raw score points (E.S.=.79) and Level Two students progressed 11.4 points (E.S.=.81).*

* The effect size, developed by Jacob Cohen, is the ratio of the mean gain to the standard deviation of the gain. This ratio provides an index of improvement in standard deviation units irrespective of the sample. According to Cohen, 0.2 is a small E.S., 0.5 is a moderate E.S., and effect sizes of 0.8 or above are considered to be educationally meaningful.

TABLE 1

1985-86 Changes in E.S.L. Students'
Mean John Test Scores

Level	N*	Mean Raw Score	S.D.	Mean Difference	S.D. Difference	Effect Size**
<u>Level One</u>						
Pretest	2,754	15.6	18.5	12.4	15.7	.79
Posttest		28.0	21.3			
<u>Level Two</u>						
Pretest	1,377	32.9	20.1	11.4	14.1	.81
Posttest		44.3	20.9			
<u>Level Three</u>						
Pretest	892	44.7	20.6	9.5	13.5	.70
Posttest		54.2	20.7			
<u>Level Four</u>						
Pretest	444	64.3	16.4	6.2	11.7	.52
Posttest		70.5	14.3			

*Includes all students for whom valid achievement information was available for both the pretest and posttest.

**The effect size (E.S.), developed by Jacob Cohen, is the ratio of the mean gain to the standard deviation of the gain. This ratio provides an index of improvement in standard deviation units irrespective of the size of the sample. According to Cohen, 0.2 is a small E.S., 0.5 is a moderate E.S., and 0.8 is considered to be a large E.S. Only effect sizes of 0.8 and above are considered to be educationally meaningful.

- The magnitude of the improvement in test scores from the pretest to the posttest by students enrolled in Levels One and Two is considered substantial, and educationally meaningful.
- The scores of students enrolled in Levels Three and Four increased moderately from the pretest to the posttest.

These gains indicate, that for students for whom there were complete data, the program is meeting its goal of increased English proficiency. The scores of students enrolled in Levels Three and Four increased 9.5 points (E.S. = .70) and 6.2 (E.S. = .52), respectively. These are moderate gains, but indicative of improved English abilities while students were in the program. These findings are consistent with the program's emphasis on improving E.S.L. competency. The more moderate gains at the higher levels may be partially the result of a statistical phenomenon known as the ceiling effect whereby students scoring initially high on a test have less chance of improving on a retest than students initially scoring at very low levels.

B.E. Component

The pretest and posttest scores of B.E. students on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) were analyzed by level of difficulty. Students were tested when they entered the program and at the end of each term. Complete pretest and posttest data were available for 4,591 students, 45 percent of the 1985-86 B.E. students. Students' pretest and posttest raw scores for 1985-86 were converted into scale scores in order to assess improvement.

B.E. students enrolled in the lowest level took the "E" series of the TABE reading test. As shown in Table 2, the scale scores increased from 310 on the pretest to 330 on the posttest, a gain which is considered to be of moderate educational significance (E.S. = .56). Mid-level B.E. students' scores on the "M" series of the TABE reading test increased from an average scale score of 437 on the pretest to an average of 449 on the posttest (E.S. = .30). Upper-level B.E. students took the "D" series of the TABE reading test and showed smaller gains, with students'

average scores increasing from 524 on the pretest to 529 on the posttest (E.S. = .12). These findings indicate that the scores of students enrolled in the lowest level reading classes improved a moderate amount while the scores of students at mid-and-upper levels showed more modest gains.

High School Equivalency

Students enrolled in H.S.E. classes took G.E.D. practice examinations, which are administered at the beginning and end of each term. Complete pretest and posttest data were available for 92 students or only one percent of H.S.E. students. Because of this lack of complete data on H.S.E. students, the following comparisons do not constitute a valid assessment of the program. The scores on the practice sub-tests of the 92 students with complete data indicated that they would have passed the G.E.D. Program staff noted that many students take the G.E.D. instead of practice examinations and many of those who pass the exam do not report the results to A.B.E. staff.

TWO-YEAR COMPARISON OF STUDENT OUTCOMES

E.S.L. Component

John Test raw scores for 1984-85 and 1985-86 were available for 1,643 (40 percent) of the 4,146 two-year E.S.L. students. The mean raw score for students was 31.5 (S.D. = 21.3) in fall, 1984 and 53.0 (S.D. = 20.0) in spring, 1986. The gain of 21.5 points is considered of substantial educational significance (E.S. = 1.12) and indicates that students enrolled in the program for the two-year period made important gains in English competency.

B.E. Component

Unlike the 1985-86 analysis of TABE scores which presented scale scores, the two-year comparison reports grade equivalents since 1984-

TABLE 2
1985-86 Changes in B.E. Students'
Mean TABE Reading Test Scores

Level	N ^a	Mean Scale Score	Mean Difference	Effect ^b Size
<u>Level One "E"</u>				
Pretest Posttest	596	310 330	20.0	.56*
<u>Level Two "M"</u>				
Pretest Posttest	2,332	437 449	12.0	.30
<u>Level Three "D"</u>				
Pretest Posttest	1,663	524 529	5.0	.12

^a Includes all students for whom valid achievement information was available for both the pretest and posttest.

^b Effect sizes were computed using raw scores supplied by A.B.E./H.S.E. staff. These raw scores were converted into scale scores in order to allow comparisons across the three different test levels.

* The effect size, developed by Jacob Cohen, is the ratio of the mean gain to the standard deviation of the gain. This ratio provides an index of improvement in standard deviation units irrespective of the size of the sample. According to Cohen, 0.2 is a small E.S., 0.5 is a moderate E.S., and 0.8 is considered to be a large E.S. Only effect sizes of 0.8 and above are considered to be educationally meaningful.

• The change in Level One students' scores is considered to be of moderate educational significance.

TABLE 3

A Two-Year Comparison of E.S.L. Students' Mean
John Test Scores

Program Year	N*	Raw Score	S.D.	Mean Difference	S.D. Difference	Effect Size
1984-85	1,643	31.5	21.3	21.5	19.3	1.12**
1985-85		53.0	20.0			

*Includes all students who had valid achievement information for both 1984-85 and 1985-86.

**The effect size, developed by Jacob Cohen, is the ratio of the mean gain to the standard deviation of the gain. This ratio provides an index of improvement in standard deviation units irrespective of the sample. According to Cohen, 0.2 is a small E.S., 0.5 is a moderate E.S., and 0.8 is considered to be a large E.S. Only effect sizes of 0.8 and above are considered to be educationally meaningful. This value is considered to be of substantial educational significance.

TABLE 4

A Two-Year Comparison of Basic Education Students'
Mean Reading and Math Test Scores

Program Year	N*	Mean G.E.**	S.D.	Mean Difference	S.D. Difference	Effect Size***
Reading						
1984-85	1,241	4.8	1.9	1.1	1.6	.69
1985-86		5.9	2.3			
Math						
1984-85	23	5.2	1.2	1.7	1.9	.89
1985-86		6.9	2.3			

*Includes all students for whom information was available for both the pretest and posttest.

**It is important to be cautious in the interpretation of grade equivalents, since they are often used incorrectly. Grade equivalents are not directly comparable across different tests. Furthermore, grade equivalents should not be used in statistical calculations since their units are not equal. An improvement of 0.4 grade equivalent units may be more educationally significant at very low low grade levels than when scores are on or above grade level. Generally, O.E.A./H.S.E.U. would not report an analysis based only on grade equivalents, however, it was the only analysis that could be done since the form and levels for the TABE test were not reported, for 1984-85, making it impossible to determine scaled scores which allow statistical comparison. The following analyses are presented with these caveats in mind.

***The effect size, developed by Jacob Cohen, is the ratio of the mean gain to the standard deviation of the gain. This ratio provides an index of improvement in standard deviation units irrespective of the size of the sample. According to Cohen, 0.2 is a small E.S., 0.5 is moderate E.S., and 0.8 is considered to be a large E.S. Only effect sizes of 0.8 and above are considered to be educationally meaningful.

TABLE 3

A Two-Year Comparison of the Percentage of Basic Education
Students at Each Course Level

1984-85 Course Level	N*	1985-86 Course Level			
		One	Two	Three	Four
One	404	75%	16%	7%	2%
Two	503	7	59	21	13
Three	435	2	6	74	20
Four	130		7	13	80

*Includes all students who had valid course level information for both 1984-85 and 1985-86.

- ° Twenty-five percent of the students who entered Level One in 1984-85 moved to a higher level the following year.
- ° Twenty-four percent of the 1984-85 Level Two B.E. students moved to a higher level the following year.
- ° Twenty percent of the 1983-84 Level Three students moved to Level Four in 1985-86.

TABLE 4

A Two-Year Comparison of the Percentage of English as a
Second Language Students at Each Course Level

1984-85 Course Level	N*	1985-86 Course Level			
		One	Two	Three	Four
One	1,436	54%	29%	15%	2%
Two	622	18	43	31	8
Three	443	5	16	56	23
Four	299	10	2	13	75

*Includes all students for whom valid achievement information was available for 1984-85 and 1985-86.

- Forty-six percent of the E.S.L. students who entered Level One in 1984-85 advanced to a higher level in 1985-86.
- Thirty-nine percent of the 1984-85 Level Two E.S.L. students progressed to a higher level in 1985-85.
- Twenty-three percent of the 1984-85 Level Three E.S.L. students progressed to the fourth level in 1985-86.

TABLE 5

A Two-Year Comparison of Student Enrollment by Program

1984-85	N*	1985-86 PROGRAM		
		B.E.	E.S.L.	H.S.E
B.E.	2,431	88%	2%	10%
E.S.L.	3,775	4	94	2
H.S.E.	908	11	11	78

* Includes all students who had valid course level information for both 1984-85 and 1985-86.

- Ten percent of the students who were enrolled in B.E. classes in 1984-85 moved to H.S.E. classes the following year.
- Six percent of the 1984-85 E.S.L. students were placed in B.E. or H.S.E. classes the following year.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The A.B.E./H.S.E. program served 38,800 students in 1985-86, nearly 5,000 more than the number served in 1984-85 and double that of 1983-84. In recent years, immigrants have comprised a sizable proportion of this population, increasing in 1985-86 by approximately ten percent over 1984-85 (48 percent and 39 percent respectively). These students, many with limited English proficiency, primarily enrolled in E.S.L. classes; some later moved to B.E. or H.S.E. classes to continue their studies. American-born students were the main enrollees in B.L., B.E., and H.S.E. classes. Program staff observed that many of these students had achieved limited success in the traditional educational system and sought to acquire the language and basic mathematical skills necessary to enter or advance in the job market.

For many students, then, the A.B.E./H.S.E. program represented their gateway to increased literacy and a means of enhancing their employment options, the importance of which is underscored by the fact that one-fifth of the program's students in 1985-86 were public assistance recipients.

Measured against the objectives set, data collected and analyzed by the evaluation team suggest that the 1985-86 A.B.E./H.S.E. program does provide a successful educational option for some participants. However given the limited number of students for whom data were complete, these findings should be interpreted with caution. Though not entirely without problems, the program received generally positive ratings from coordinators, facilitators, teachers, and students.

Overall, students interviewed were highly positive about program services,

and about one-half reported that their classes had incorporated information about further educational opportunities. However, students also raised questions with evaluators regarding further educational opportunities, which suggests an area of student interest that program staff might consider making an integral part of classes.

Program staff generally viewed the delivery of services positively, but raised several areas of concern. For example, regional coordinators and facilitators singled out the need for more staff development for teachers. Specifically, they recommended training sessions in E.S.L. methodology for teachers lacking professional preparation in that area.

Distribution of materials (paper and books) in a timely fashion was another problem reported by staff. According to coordinators, this is a carry-over problem from previous years that has worsened because of the program's rapid expansion.

The unfavorable physical condition of some class sites was the problem most frequently cited by program staff. Again, this problem, in part, developed from the rapid growth of the program. Moreover, the goal of providing classes in a variety of settings added to the problem. The result has been classrooms with insufficient seating capacities or classrooms not entirely appropriate for adults. Program administrators proposed the establishment of permanent class sites as a solution to this problem.

Analyses of student achievement data demonstrated positive results for one-year and two-year students with complete data. During 1985-86, E.S.L. students in each of the four levels improved from the pretest to the posttest, with the most significant gains occurring at Levels One and Two. B.E. students with complete TABE pretest and posttest scores also showed improvement,

with the largest gains also found at the lower class levels. H.S.E. test results were too limited to allow definitive conclusions to be drawn. Finally, more than 30 percent of students who were unemployed in 1984-85 found employment during the following year.

The following recommendations are based on the findings contained in this report:

- Program teachers should be offered to additional paid in-service training sessions in E.S.L. methodology and teaching methods for adult students.
- Permanent class sites should be established to accommodate the ever-increasing student population and to eliminate current site-related problems.
- Current supply distribution practices should be revised to ensure problem-free movement of books and materials to regional class sites.
- Regional coordinators should continue to encourage program staff to record student data accurately and completely so as to minimize data loss.
- Teachers should, where appropriate, incorporate information about higher education into advanced program classes.